7.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

7.1 Overview

Goal: Community facilities, services, and infrastructure that meet citizens' needs and contribute to quality of life in a cost-effective manner.

This element addresses several types of public facilities and services (police, fire, libraries, human services, municipal facilities – see Map 7) and infrastructure systems (water, sanitary sewer, stormwater drainage) provided by the City of Portsmouth. Several other types of public facilities and infrastructure, including public schools, parks and recreation, and transportation, are addressed in other Comprehensive Plan chapters (3.0 Education, 8.0 Transportation, and 9.0 Parks, Open Space, and Environment). However, it should be noted that Policies #1 and 2 in Section 7.2 below apply to all community facilities and services, including schools, parks, and recreational facilities.

Social Services building

Police

Police protection for the citizens of Portsmouth is provided by the Portsmouth City Police Department. There is approximately one police officer for every 400 citizens, which is the national average. The Portsmouth City Police coordinate with the Virginia State Police (located in the Greenbrier section of Chesapeake) for bomb squad and interstate highway enforcement issues.

Police operations are based in the headquarters located in Downtown Portsmouth at 711 Crawford Street, as well as a variety of city-owned and leased facilities dispersed throughout Portsmouth. The City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) calls for construction of a new facility to address the operational issues associated with dispersed facilities and to improve communications, business processes, and customer service. A site on Effingham Street next to Fire Station 1 has been identified as a potential location for this facility.

Crime (both real and perceived) has been identified as a major factor affecting citizens' quality of life. Community policing is a major Police Department initiative, including Neighborhood Enforcement Action Teams (NEAT) that work in neighborhoods throughout Portsmouth. The department is integrating community policing throughout its operations by developing Police Service Areas. Sworn personnel from throughout the department will be assigned to

specific geographical areas to enhance problem-solving teams along with the NEAT officers. Additionally, the department is undertaking a complete organizational assessment as it moves to obtain first-time accreditation from the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission.

The number of arrests per capita is higher in Portsmouth than in other South Hampton Roads communities (Table 7). However, crime in Portsmouth has decreased in most categories of offense over the last 10 years and the following categories experienced significant decreases from 1998 to 2003: larceny (10.0% decrease), aggravated assault (13.1%), robbery (22.3%), burglary (35.5%), and auto theft (38.2%). The Police Department has set the following measures of success to be achieved by 2008:

- Public perception for feelings of safety will surpass comparable cities nationwide.
- Serious crime in Portsmouth will be lower than comparable cities nationwide.
- The Police Department will be fully staffed, with a waiting list of qualified recruits.

In addition to the Police Department, the Sheriff's Office of the City of Portsmouth operates the City Jail, provides court security, serves warrants, and offers a variety of community programs. Located in Downtown Portsmouth on Crawford Street, the City Jail had an average of 484 inmates in 2004, which is 68 percent over its capacity of 288. The jail is connected to the Portsmouth District Court building, which is also owned by the City.

A second correctional institution – the Hampton Roads Regional Jail, located off of Airline Boulevard – serves the Cities of Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, and Portsmouth. A maximum-security facility constructed in 1998, the Regional Jail has a capacity of 1,200 prisoners. Currently it has 1,050 inmates, including 200 contracted for by the City of Portsmouth to alleviate overcrowding at the City Jail.

Table 7. Crime Statistics, South Hampton Roads Communities

Community	Group A Arrests[1] (2003)	Population[2] (2002 Estimate)	Residents per each Group A Arrest
Chesapeake	3,378	205,100	61
Norfolk	4,056	234,100	58
Portsmouth	3,084	98,400	32
Suffolk	1,323	69,200	52
Virginia Beach	8,369	428,400	51
South Hampton Roads	**20,210**	**1,035,200**	**51**

[1]Source: Virginia Uniform Crime Reporting Program. Group A arrests include a variety of types of crime.
[2]Source: Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

Fire and Emergency Services

The City of Portsmouth Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services provides a variety of services, including fire suppression, pre-hospital emergency medical services (ALS transport), hazardous materials emergency response and mitigation, technical rescue, marine incident response, public fire and EMS education, emergency disaster management, fire prevention, and arson investigation. Total Fire Department personnel numbered 240 in 2003. The Fire Department operates eight stations in the City of Portsmouth. A ninth station was closed and combined with another station in 2001. The City's CIP includes construction of a new station in Truxtun in the Portsmouth Boulevard/Deep Creek Boulevard area. In addition, the Fire Department has identified the potential need for a new station in West Norfolk.

Firehouse

Average response time to emergency calls averaged slightly over five minutes in 2002, which is at or below the response time of fire departments in other Hampton Roads communities but does not meet the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Standard 1710, adopted in 2001.[1]

Libraries

The City of Portsmouth operates a library system consisting of a main library in the Downtown on Court Street and branch libraries in Churchland, Cradock, and Hodges Manor (the Manor Branch). Used by residents of Suffolk and Chesapeake as well as Portsmouth, the Churchland library has been identified as inadequate for present demands. Construction of a new library to replace the existing one is included in the City's CIP and land has been acquired by the City in Churchland to accommodate this facility. The possibility of regional participation in this project should be explored.

Portsmouth Public Library

The traditional role of libraries in community life is changing due to societal and technological trends such as widespread use of the Internet. These trends need to be taken into account in planning for future library facilities and services (e.g., by providing expanded hours and computer access to accommodate the varied lifestyles of users). A long-range plan is needed to evaluate usage at existing libraries and to explore the possibility of developing a new, state-of-the-art facility, for example at the new campus of Tidewater Community College (see discussion below).

[1] NFPA Standard 1710 calls for a time of four minutes or less for the arrival of a unit with first responder or higher level capability at an emergency medical incident. This objective should occur 90% of the time.

Human Services

A variety of services for individuals and families in Portsmouth are provided by the City's Department of Social Services (DSS) and Department of Behavioral Healthcare (DBH). Examples include foster care, adult and child protective services, job assistance, and medical aid provided by DSS and mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse services provided by DBH. Together, DSS and DBH provide an important safety net for Portsmouth's poor and disadvantaged population, as well as programs that help citizens lead productive, self-sufficient lives.

DSS is based in the Portsmouth Human Resources Building across High Street from I.C. Norcom High School while DBH operates out of two downtown buildings. The City's CIP calls for relocation of DBH to a new building to be constructed on a site near the Social Services Building, thus consolidating these related functions in one area. With the Norcom High School located across High Street, this area offers the future opportunity to locate additional community-serving facilities in a civic complex.

Municipal Facilities

Lightship Museum

Maintained by the City of Portsmouth Department of General Services, municipal facilities include many properties owned outright by the City, as well as some properties that are leased. A number of the municipal facilities are discussed above under the various categories of community services provided by the City of Portsmouth. Examples of other municipal facilities include City Hall, city-operated museums (Children's Museum of Virginia, Courthouse Galleries, Lightship Museum, and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum), and maintenance facilities such as the Public Works Compound (Operations Center).

Several interrelated issues pertain to the location and operation of municipal facilities. First is the importance of efficient service to citizens in the form of facilities that are readily accessible and cost-effective in their operations. From this perspective shared or joint-use facilities can offer benefits to citizens while providing opportunities for sharing of resources and costs. Second, municipal facilities with significant numbers of employees and/or visitors can enhance economic and community activity in the surrounding area. An example is the contribution to the economic vitality of the Downtown made by City Hall, the museums, and other city facilities. A third important issue is the need to maximize return on scarce land resources in a predominantly built-out city. From this perspective City Hall, City Jail/ Portsmouth District Court, and the Public Works Compound (Operations Center) are located on land that would ideally be better used for private development due to a waterfront location or interstate access.

Water/Sanitary Sewer

The Portsmouth Department of Public Utilities/Works operates the city-owned water system, which serves approximately 140,000 persons in Portsmouth and parts of Chesapeake and Suffolk. The water supply is drawn from four lakes and five deep wells located on 3,300 acres in the City of Suffolk. A filtration plant, the Lake Kilby Treatment Plant, is also located in Suffolk. The system's total safe yield of 25.8 million gallons per day (mgd) is well in excess of the average daily demand of 17.36 mgd and the peak daily demand of 20.12 mgd in 2003. The system also includes storage facilities, pump stations, and a 543-mile long distribution and transmission system.

The Department of Public Utilities/Works also maintains the sanitary sewer collection network, which includes approximately 435 miles of gravity sewers and force mains, 26 collection wells, and 61 pumping stations. This network conveys the City's sewage to two sewage treatment plants operated by the Hampton Roads Sanitation District: the Nansemond Plant in Suffolk (which serves Churchland) and the Virginia Initiative Plant in Norfolk (which serves the remainder of Portsmouth).

Portsmouth's water supply/treatment and sanitary sewer treatment facilities appear to have sufficient capacity to meet present and future needs. The Department has undertaken a Water System Firm Yield Study and Master Plan Update to assess the impacts of future water demands and regulatory changes on the City's water system. However, various components of the water distribution and sewage collection networks are in need of rehabilitation due to the age of the infrastructure (many lines are more than 100 years old and a full 63% of these systems are in operation beyond their useful lives). According to a December 2001 study by the Department of Public Utilities/Works, Portsmouth's overall utility system (both water and sanitary sewer) has a replacement value of about $550 million. Based on industry standards, the City should be spending about $9 million per year to replace aging portions of this system, including $6 million per year to replace water and sewer lines in neighborhoods. Planning efforts should recognize that required funding needs to keep up with inflation as costs increase over time. The City has initiated a Neighborhood Water and Sewer Replacement Program to address the problem of deferred maintenance of these aging utility systems. A key issue for this program is the need to coordinate programmed utility replacements with other city activities designed to promote neighborhood revitalization and economic development. Assessment of the condition of the supporting water and sewer infrastructure should be a key component of any redevelopment strategy.

Stormwater Drainage

Paradise Creek

The City of Portsmouth's stormwater drainage system is operated by the Stormwater Management Division of the Department of Public Utilities/Works. The system is comprised of 250 miles of drainage pipe, 42 miles of ditches, 9,000 drains and catch basins, and 488 outfalls that drain into area waterways and ultimately into the Chesapeake Bay. Like the City's water and sewer systems, the stormwater drainage system is very old and in need of rehabilitation. The stormwater management system has an estimated replacement value of approximately $155 million. Based on industry standards, the City should be spending nearly $6.6 million annually to manage the system, or about $4 million more than the current level of investment. The need to address federal and state requirements regarding the water quality impacts of the stormwater system is a related issue.

The City has developed a Stormwater Management Plan for adoption and implementation. This plan incrementally raises the Stormwater Management Fee to provide necessary funding for the maintenance of existing stormwater facilities, compliance with current regulations, and for additional public education on stormwater issues. The pace and amount of the incremental fee increases should be reviewed periodically to ensure adequacy, especially in light of the implementation of new regulations and inflationary increases in maintenance costs. The Stormwater Management Plan does not address the construction of new stormwater facilities (curb, gutter, and drainage) in areas lacking them nor does it address stormwater facility "betterment" in areas that have some stormwater facilities, but in which the facilities may be inadequate in size, consist of open ditches, or have no curb or gutters. This indicates the need for a comprehensive city-wide inventory and plan to integrate the already defined maintenance needs with new construction, "betterment," and anticipated regulatory requirements.

Policies and action strategies for the above community facilities, service, and infrastructure systems are articulated in Section 7.2. Policy #1 advocates establishment and use by the City of a rational methodology in planning for the provision of community facilities and services. This methodology, called the Community Facility Planning System, should begin with the identification of objective levels of service or performance standards for each type of community facility or service. (As an example, the number of officers per resident population and emergency vehicle response time are standards commonly used for police and fire service, respectively.) The levels of service/performance standards can then be used to plan for and program improvements to existing facilities and services or development of new ones to meet identified deficiencies.

Several other issues related to the provision of community facilities and services by the City are covered by Policy #1, including recommendations to optimize their geographic distribution, provide joint use facilities where possible (including facilities shared with other jurisdictions),

and to develop adequate long-range management and maintenance programs for all city facilities as part of an overall Community Facilities Master Plan. The City's existing cemeteries (as well as the possibility of the City assuming control over currently private cemeteries) should be addressed in the Master Plan.

The planned development of a new campus of Tidewater Community College in Portsmouth provides an exciting example of the joint use opportunities that exist. As noted in Chapter 3.0 (Education), this campus could incorporate facilities and programs that provide college level courses for Portsmouth high school students. It could also incorporate a a central public library facility with features such as state-of-the-art technology and computer access around the clock to meet the contemporary needs of the community.

Policy #2 deals with the relationship of community facilities to other land uses. For example, facilities such as libraries, community centers, and schools can complement and reinforce the mix of uses in Activity Centers (see the description of Activity Centers in Section 4.2, Future Land Use). This policy also calls for locating or relocating community facilities so as not to occupy land that has higher value for private development. It should be noted that decisions regarding the relocation of existing facilities will need to be based upon feasibility studies and comparisons of the costs involved in relocation to the ultimate benefits provided to the City. Nevertheless, the City should pursue the long-term goal of relocating the City Jail/Portsmouth District Court and the Public Works Compound, in particular, to alternative locations. With respect to the jail and court complex, this will require evaluation of logistical issues related to operating the facilities together or in separate locations.

Policy #3 addresses the human service programs that serve Portsmouth residents. It recommends that programs be targeted and coordinated to provide disadvantaged citizens with the support and training needed to succeed, accompanied by systematic monitoring to determine if the programs are effective in meeting this mission.

Policy #3 also addresses prevention as a key to reducing crime in Portsmouth. Effective crime prevention is related to many different factors, such as economic opportunity; stable, healthy neighborhoods; quality public schools; and active, involved residents and parents. One emerging approach is Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), which is based on the premise that design of the physical environment can positively influence human behavior to create a climate of safety and reduce crime. From this perspective community beautification and roadway corridor improvement programs (see Chapter 10.0, Community Appearance) can create a positive image that deters crime and inspires residents to maintain interest in keeping their area safe and clean.[2] As another example, Policy #3 recommends development of a citywide lighting strategy to help deter crime.

[2] National Crime Prevention Council website

The City's water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater drainage systems are covered by Policy #4. This policy reinforces the need for replacement of aging infrastructure and also notes that infrastructure investments should be targeted and coordinated to support the City's neighborhood revitalization and economic development activities. This includes ensuring that adequate water, sewer, and other infrastructure systems are available to serve economic development projects planned for specific sites.

The following are proposed as indicators to measure the success of the City's policies and programs for community facilities, services, and infrastructure:

- ***Police:*** Crime as tracked by the Virginia Uniform Crime Reporting Program – year-to-year trend, comparison to other Hampton Roads communities, comparison to comparable cities nationwide; public perception of safety as measured by citizen surveys, comparison to comparable cities nationwide; emergency response times, comparison to comparable cities nationwide
- ***Fire and Emergency Services:*** Emergency response time (NFPA Standard 1710 or comparable standard)
- ***Libraries:*** To be determined; staffing per 1,000 persons served, expenditures on materials per capita, circulation per capita, square footage of space per capita, and utilization rates are examples of standards from other communities
- ***Human Services:*** Number of persons who are able to leave assistance programs to lead self-sufficient lives
- ***Municipal Facilities:*** A long-range plan is needed to optimize the future distribution of city facilities based upon objective criteria and standards, as well as cost-benefit analysis. As an example, this plan could call for the relocation of the City Jail to the vicinity of the Hampton Roads Regional Jail as funding becomes available, freeing up a downtown waterfront development site.
- ***Public Infrastructure Systems (Water, Sanitary Sewer, and Stornwater Drainage):*** funds expended to replace aging infrastructure in comparison to industry standards, level of coordination of infrastructure investments with neighborhood revitalization and economic development priorities

7.2 Policies and Action Strategies

Policy #1: Community Facility Planning System
Establish an ongoing system to 1) identify needs/optimal locations and 2) set priorities for improvements to existing and development of new community facilities and services.

Action Strategies

- Establish objective level of service or performance standards (e.g., fire/emergency vehicular response time) to determine needs for each type of community facility/service
- Based upon the level of service/performance standards, develop an overall Master Plan to meet identified needs through the orderly future expansion of existing or development of new facilities. Initiate projects only if they are in accordance with the approved Master Plan

- Organize development of community facilities and services based upon geographic subareas within the City, balancing the cost-effectiveness of regional service provision with accessibility to local neighborhoods *[Policy Link: Neighborhoods #4]*
- Wherever feasible, provide shared rather than single-use facilities to promote cost efficiencies and more comprehensive services for citizens
- Ensure that sufficient resources are allocated in operating and capital budgets to meet citizens' needs for community facilities and services
- Institute and fund a comprehensive Facilities Management Program providing for adequate maintenance of all city and school facilities
- Investigate opportunities for shared facilities with other jurisdictions

Policy #2: Relationship to Other Land Uses
Integrate community facilities into the City's pattern of land uses.

Action Strategies

- Where possible, include community facilities such as schools and libraries in major (regional) and community mixed-use activity centers *[Policy Link: Land Use #4]*
- Provide safe and convenient vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connections between community facilities and the neighborhoods they serve
- In view of the City's scarce land resources, (re)locate community facilities so as not to occupy land that is better used to support high-value private development (e.g., downtown waterfront, I-264 interchanges)
- Take advantage of opportunities to develop open spaces adjacent to community facilities as public amenities (e.g., well-designed plazas, public gathering places)
- Seek appropriate opportunities to locate regional non-taxable facilities/services to areas immediately adjacent to, but outside of city limits. *[Policy Link: Land Use #6]* In identifying such opportunities, balance the tax revenues lost against the benefits derived from having the facility within the City

Policy #3: Human Services
Continue/strengthen existing programs and provide new ones that provide advancement opportunities and a safety net for Portsmouth's poor and disadvantaged population.

Action Strategies

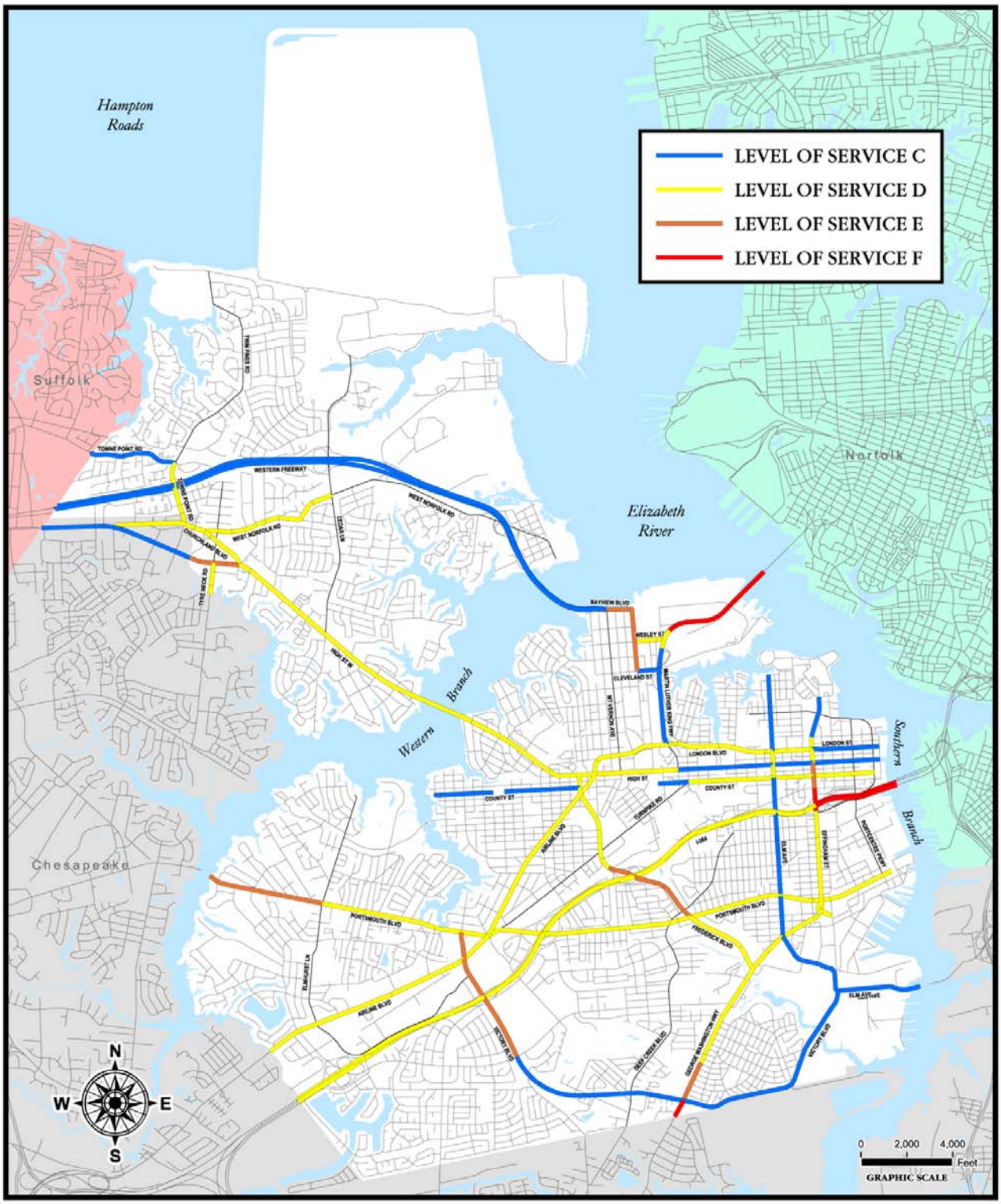
- Place priority on improving Portsmouth public schools and libraries as a key to preparing children to succeed as adults *[Policy Link: Education #1]*
- Ensure that public and private sector programs and services offered by the City of Portsmouth Department of Social Services, Department of Behavioral Healthcare Services, and others are available, accessible, and responsive in a coordinated manner to persons in need. These services include, but are not limited to:
  - Family support, including prenatal education and parenting programs
  - Child care, early childhood development, and programs to prepare pre-school age children for school

  - Recreation, culture, and activities for youths
  - Self improvement
  - Support for seniors
  - etc.
- Enhance workforce training and employment opportunities for low-income residents, e.g.:
  - Job improvement and career development programs for unemployed, underemployed, and low-wage employees
  - Support of small-business startups and development, including appropriate home-based businesses and microenterprise programs
- Pursue a comprehensive approach to public safety that combines:
  - Law enforcement
  - Crime prevention, including application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques (e.g., development of a citywide lighting strategy to deter crime)
  - Programs to address the causes of crime (e.g., education/job training)
- Develop and implement measures to monitor the effectiveness of human service programs and modify or eliminate under-performing programs

Policy #4: Public Infrastructure Systems
Develop and fund a program to replace Portsmouth's aging water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater drainage systems.

Action Strategies

- Continue the City's current programs to prioritize and replace deteriorating sections of the water and sanitary sewer systems
- Implement the Stormwater Management Plan to replace deteriorating sections of the stormwater drainage system
- Coordinate public infrastructure investments with the City's neighborhood revitalization and economic development activities:
  - Replace aging public infrastructure as part of a broader public/private investment strategy to promote revitalization of "transitional" neighborhoods, based upon priorities set by the City
  - Ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to support key economic development sites and projects
- Continue public education and outreach programs to Portsmouth citizens on the importance of properly maintaining the City's infrastructure systems
- Identify funding sources and commit funding at the levels necessary to bridge the gap between current levels of spending and the spending necessary to bring infrastructure systems to acceptable condition

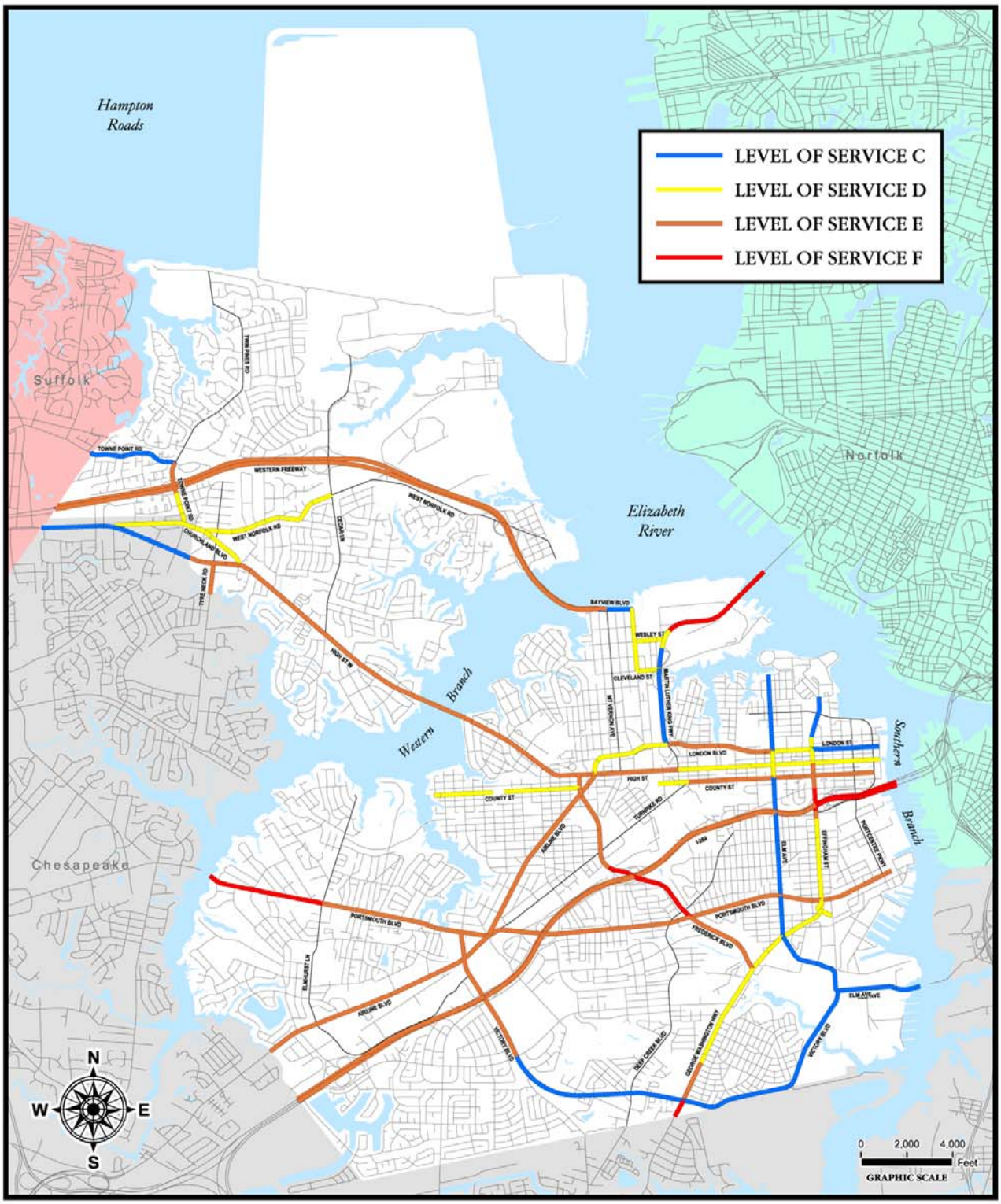


EXISTING ROADWAY LEVELS OF SERVICE (2004)

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MAP 8

DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course

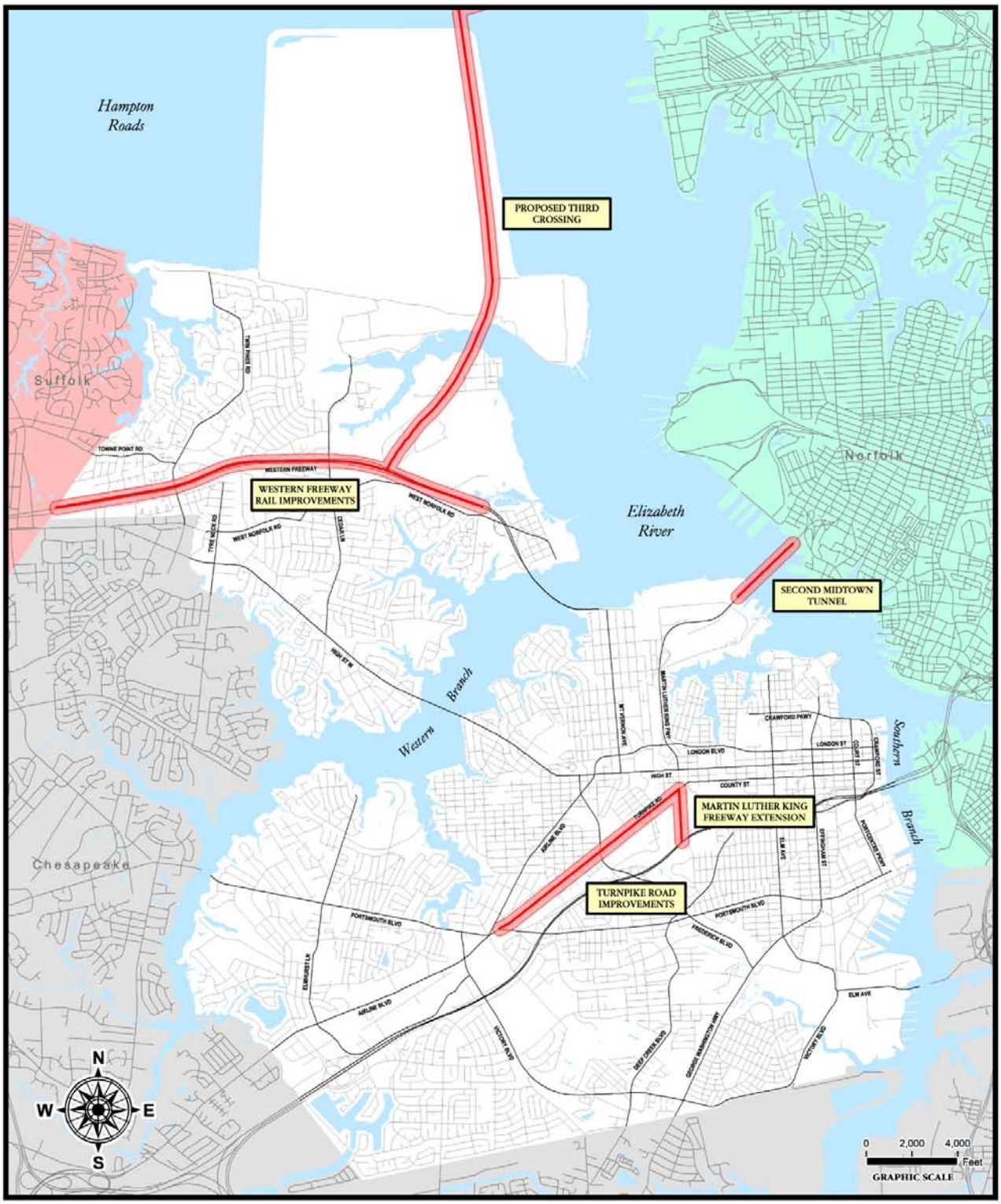


PROJECTED ROADWAY LEVELS OF SERVICE (2026)

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MAP 9

DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course



PLANNED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MAP 10

DESTINATION 2025
Setting A Bold New Course